

WASHINGTON, DC – Significant year-end deadlines grow closer and closer each day. Looming cuts to our national defense, termed as “sequestration,” will go into effect in January if Congress does not act to prevent them. I have continued to warn against these cuts, yet the Senate and the President still have failed to act. It’s another reminder of how broken Washington is. I will not accept failure, and that’s why I continue to speak out on this issue.

Every citizen and Member of Congress should understand the impact that these cuts, described by many military officials as “catastrophic,” will have on the effectiveness of our armed forces and the overall strength of our national security. On July 18, I supported a bill (H.R. 5872) requiring the President to provide every American with his plan on how the Administration plans to carry out these massive defense cuts. This legislation overwhelmingly passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 414-2. This bipartisan vote shows that while many folks may disagree on how exactly to solve this issue, everyone agrees the Administration should disclose their plans as to how sequestration would be addressed. But this acknowledgement is not enough. Action must be taken, and it is critical for the Senate and the White House to join the conversation so that true progress can be made on preventing these catastrophic cuts and ensuring that America’s armed forces remain the most capable and effective fighting force in the world.

Since the Budget Control Act passed in August of 2011, I have been repeatedly arguing that the cuts from sequestration simply cannot go into effect. Last fall, I urged the members of the so-called Super Committee to come to a solution on a deficit reduction plan to prevent these cuts, and ever since they failed at their duty, I have been sounding the alarm that Congress as a whole must prevent sequestration. On May 10, the House did its duty and passed the Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act (H.R. 5652) in order to stop these dangerous cuts. This bill found areas of waste in existing government programs and used that savings to protect our essential national security apparatus from the drastic reductions of sequestration. Unfortunately, the Senate has not yet considered this bill, nor has it presented its own plan to address sequestration.

In the coming weeks, the House will vote on various pieces of legislation to limit government overregulation as well as to prevent tax increases on American taxpayers in January. These are valuable initiatives that will release strain on our job creators so that businesses can begin hiring and Americans can get back to work. However, on August 3, Congress is scheduled to go into a month-long district work period. While I do believe the best solutions for our nation’s problems come from main streets across America, I am adamant that Congress should not adjourn until it has done its duty by addressing the looming tax hike and sending commonsense legislation to the President’s desk to prevent the disastrous cuts of sequestration.

These are important issues that cannot be ignored, and the uncertainty caused by Congress' inaction affects not only every taxpayer, but every individual defending our nation, including our military leaders devising strategies, our civilians supporting national defense efforts, and, most importantly, our brave troops on the ground fighting for our freedoms. They are all waiting for Congress to do its duty, and I adamantly believe that Congress should stay in Washington until its job is done. Now is not the time for political gamesmanship. Now is the time for action.

Please keep in touch with me as this debate continues. I can be reached via telephone at (202) 225-4261, through email on my website (www.wittman.house.gov), via Facebook (www.Facebook.com/reprobwittman), or on Twitter (www.twitter.com/robwittman).

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

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